THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 1, Number 1 November/December 1976

Our Beginning

For years bisexual people in the San Francisco Bay Area have looked for a bisexual movement to start, to provide a base of strength and a sense of community for people who were relating to, or wishing to relate to, both women and men.

Recently, a group of these women and men got together and decided that the time for public acknowledgement and support for bisexual people had come. A steering committee was formed, which has had several meetings in the past few months. The new Bisexual Center and this newsletter, the Bi-Monthly, are two of the results.

As soon as possible, we are hoping to have a physical location, probably in San Francisco. Presently we have a mailing address--1209 Sutter Street, #1643, San Francisco, CA 94109--and a message service--(415) 441-4545, ext. 236.

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Our group is enthusiastic and supportive of one another and of bisexuality in general. We all self-identify as bi, some of us for many years, some only recently. In addition, we have many skills and ideas we are willing to share. A Committee on Philosophy and Objectives (Jeanne Paslé-Green) has been formed--its beginning statement is on page three. We need your input---criticisms as well as contributions. Please respond.

The Counseling, Groups and Workshops Committee (Joan Israel) coordinates groups and workshops we make referrals to, in order to be sure there are no conflicting dates. If you're interested in any of these committees, call and leave a message for the person whose name follows the committee name.

We are acting as a referral service for groups, workshops and individual counseling. We have a Screening Committee (Maggi Rubenstein) to ensure we refer you to experienced and qualified people.

We have engaged the services of very capable supportive lawyers, grant writers, counselors, facilitators and others. The response from the public so far has been extensive and supportive. We received over 100 letters as a result of a short article in the San Francisco Chronicle,

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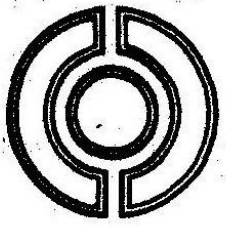
(August 24, 1976), some of them from other states and countries. In only 2 months we have over 600 people on our mailing list, and this is only the beginning! All this is happening because we want bisexuality to be accepted, as Margaret Mead says, as a "valid form of sexual and social behavior."

We need your input to be what you want us to be. In addition to what we've already mentioned, we want to have social functions as well as educational activities and a speaker's bureau. A work collective? Some of us are interested. A living collective? Again, a few are thinking about it. What else? Let us hear from you.



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THE BI-MONTHLY

This is the first Bi-Monthly. Our producing it on a regular basis will be greatly helped if you, our reader, contribute. Please send articles, poetry, graphics, and letters of response. We want loving criticism, as well as support for the statements that you agree with. The more ideas and input we have, the better the Bi-Monthly will be. We request articles not only on bisexuality but also statements on getting past labels, androgyny, getting past sex role stereotyping, political bi issues, bi-feminist issues, and uncoupling. We welcome all bi perspectives. We want our newsletter and our point of view to reach out to people who love people, whatever their self-identity is. Please submit such articles for consideration to the Bi-Monthly at: The Bisexual Center, 1209 Sutter St., #1643, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Slowly i began to see power structures the humanistic holistic growth and spiritual movements and indeed even the sexual freedom movement had all neatly camoflaged the reality under the guise of peace love freedom we are all equal and human so peace and love baby after all youve come a long way and this is IT smile and dig the good vibes and live happily ever after take responsibility how you live your life is your choice lighten up lets all make love and bliss out with universal wisdom its all your karma and you created it

well HELP IM DROWNING

going under for a third time ive taken responsibility for every thing and im spiritual im sexual ive passed all the tests with flying colors ive worked so hard been so committed i love you i love me why arent i free .....

and why are you afraid of me?

Joanne paslé-green october 1975

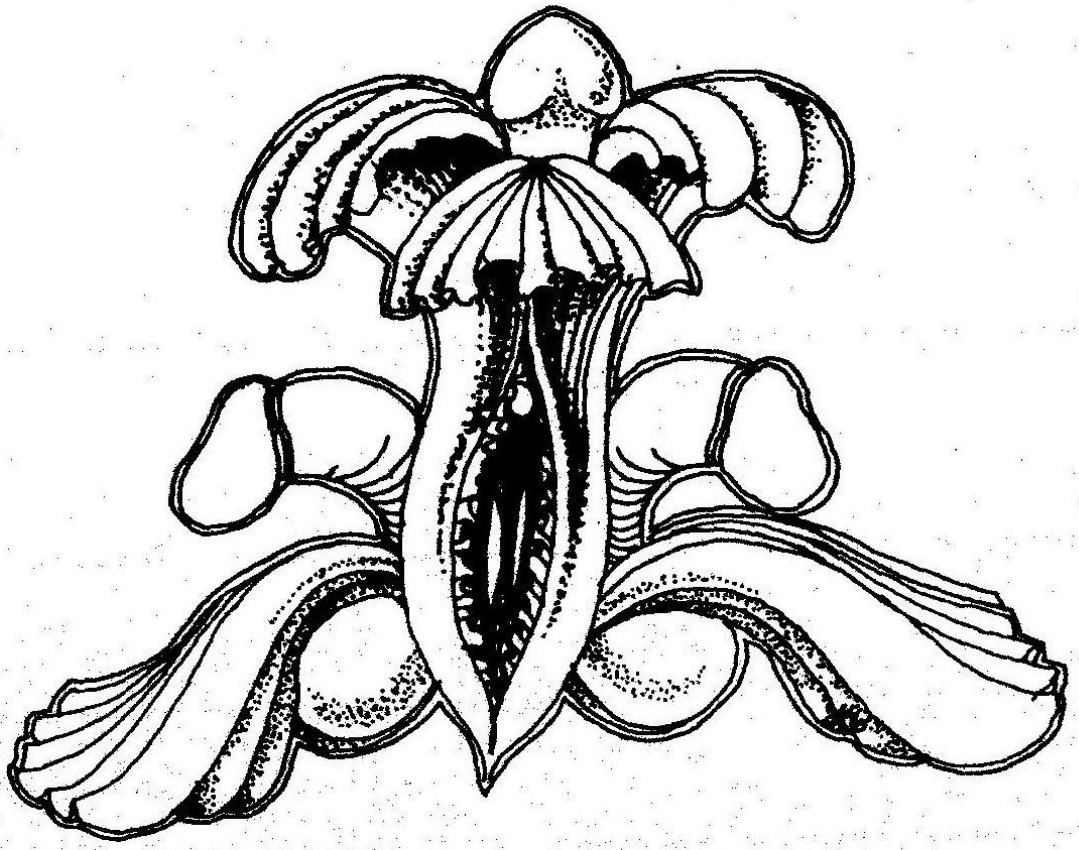
"Our sex is our politics, and we carry it with us everywhere, a subtle subversion."
---James Nolan, Ramparts,
Dec. 1973, "The Third Sex"

our philosophy

We are people seeking to love and share intimately with both women and men. Self-defined as bisexuals (although such labels are limiting) we are working to create for ourselves and others a strong sense of community.

We have been caught on both sides and in the middle of the homosexual/heterosexual polarity. We feel we have a unique contribution to make toward unifying polarities, equalizing relationships, and understanding the cycles of human sexuality.

We need a place to be ourselves, to be with one another, loving ourselves as we are and are becoming. The Bisexual Center will serve as a positive support base to facilitate communication, to teach each other by sharing what we are learning, and to explore the essence and potential of loving.



We got letters...*

*We received over 100 letters as a result of a newspaper article in the San Francisco Chronicle, August 24, 1976, from people expressing an interest in the Bi Center. Here are excerpts from some of those letters:

"Your center is welcome news. It is badly needed by those of us who are at least fortunate in the knowledge that we want to seek help with our sexual identities."

"Your center sounds like a great idea and only makes me wonder why it took so long to become a reality."

"While my wife is very supportive and understanding about my bisexuality, that's the full extent of my 'coming out' at the moment. Perhaps the center may help to change that a bit, though."

"I would like to say that it is about time that a center such as this has come about. There are plenty of groups for gays, but little for us bisexuals."

"Being a bisexual myself, I would like to know more of your clinic. It is hard for me living in a small town at the present. People really look down on me."

"There certainly is a need for such an organization in San Francisco. I'm surprised there is not one already in this city and wish you well with it."

"Was very happy to note the opening of the center for bisexuals to help people like myself come to terms with their lives. I want to help make the center a success."

"Although I have reservations myself about most bisexuals' commitment on sexism and gay oppression, I'm giving bisexuality a try for a while longer to see if it's socially feasible...This might help."

"I have been struggling toward a settled bisexual identity for about three years and would welcome the supportive environment of a bisexual center. I am repeatedly explaining 'gay' to women friends and lovers as well as 'straight' to gay friends and lovers. And all the while trying to understand the implications of my flexibility and how it affects my 'fit' in the world...I was gay until the age of 22 or so when I fell in love with a woman."

"I consider myself a bisexual, even though I have never been to bed with a woman, the big reason being that I have been in this hospital since I was 16... it is a maximum security state hospital. The population is all male, with some females as employees. I have a desire to be bisexual, but because of my environment it is impossible right now...When I get out, I'm going to need some help getting on with people and if I go to your center I believe I can deal with some of my fears and hassles better."

"I have lived a completely bisexual life for the last five years and a partial one for four years before that and I can tell you it has been heaven--but at the same time more hell than you can imagine. Being on the verge of denying one half of my libido, I am interested in what you have in mind with your center."

The Bisexual Center
1209 Sutter St., #1643
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 441-4545 Ext. 236

Co-Directors

Harriet Leve Maggi Rubenstein

Steering Committee

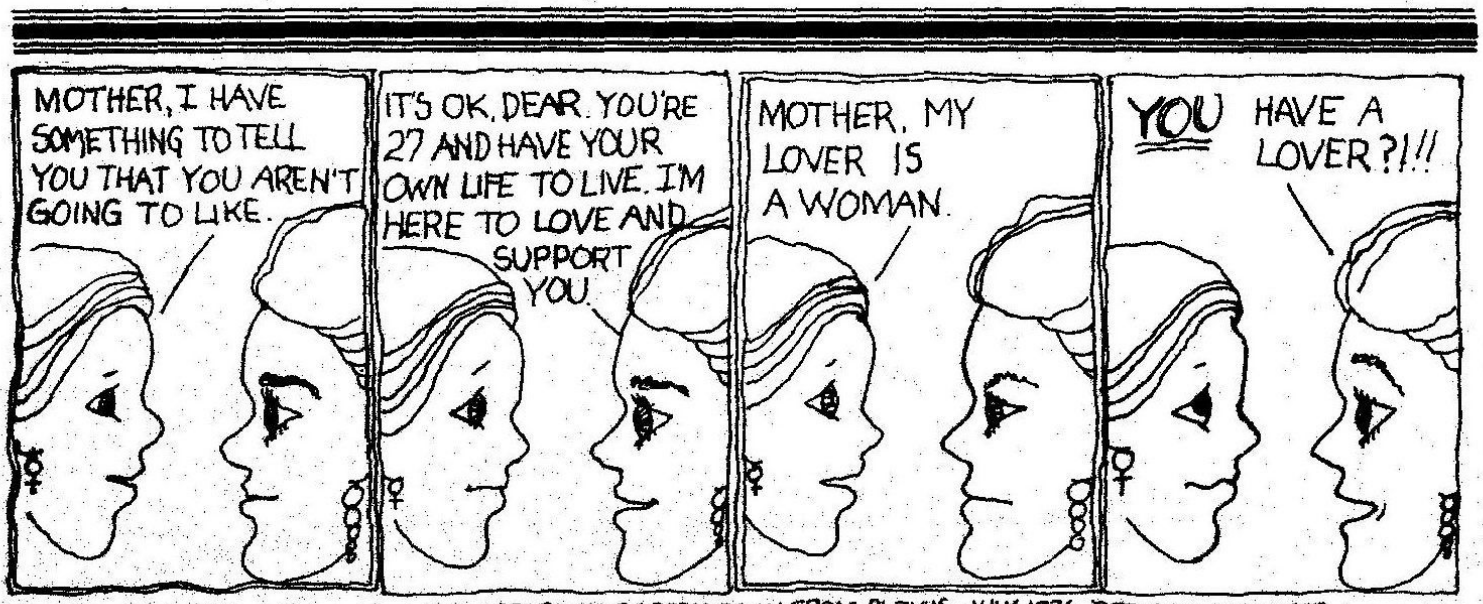
Vicki Galland
Jeanne Paslé-Green
Evelyn Hoch
Joan Israel
Jad King
Art Lehman
David Lourea
Pat Morgan
Lee Olivier
Lew Porter
Mountain Raley
Margo Rila
Hogie Wyckoff

Every issue of the Bi-Monthly will include at least two personal close-ups of members of our Steering Committee, until all of us have been presented.

Maggi Rubenstein has been personally and professionally involved with bisexual concerns for many years. She is Director of Counseling at the National Sex Forum, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at U.C. Med Center, and is co-founder and co-director of San Francisco Sex Information, a free community telephone referral service serving people in the San Francisco Bay Area for 4 years. She has spoken publicly about acceptance of bisexuality as a valid life style for many women and men. She is a feminist, supporting women's rights, gay rights and bisexual rights. Her educational degrees include: R.N., M.A. Psychology and D.A. Human Sexuality.

Harriet Leve is a bisexual woman who is very interested in developing a sense of community and a base of strength for bisexuals. She has a doctorate in counseling from Indiana University and has taught psychology courses at Indiana University and sociology courses at Purdue University. She was Director of the Special Treatment Program at the Indiana Girls School and a group therapy consultant for University Associates in Indianapolis, Indiana.

She is presently involved in the San Francisco business community and is sole owner of a travel agency and a casual wear store.


MOTHER, I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU THAT YOU AREN'T GOING TO LIKE.
IT'S OK, DEAR. YOU'RE 27 AND HAVE YOUR OWN LIFE TO LIVE. I'M HERE TO LOVE AND SUPPORT YOU.
MOTHER, MY LOVER IS A WOMAN.
YOU HAVE A LOVER?!!

REDRAWN BY PERMISSION FROM PLEXUS, JULY 1976, DEBORAH DALLINGER.

BISEXUALITY: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

by Margaret Mead

The time has come, I think, when we must recognize bisexuality as a normal form of human behavior.

The whole question of sexual preference has for so long been taboo in our and most other Western societies that the subject of bisexuality has seldom been raised or, until very recently, frankly and openly discussed. The idea that a woman--or a man--is capable of loving members of both sexes simply does not occur to most people.

In our culture it is well-known that very young girls may go through a period of falling in love with another girl or an older, admired woman. Usually we treat this as a more or less harmless phase of adolescence that will pass as soon as a girl enters into livelier relationships with boys and young men. Boys too may go through a period when they feel closest to someone of their own sex, but we treat such relationships, especially if they involve sexual experimentation, much more gingerly, for any shadow of doubt cast on a male's heterosexuality may adversely affect people's attitude toward him throughout his life.

Occasionally the transition fails--as we see it. But for the most part men and women, conforming quite easily to the customs within which they were reared, confine themselves to a heterosexual choice of lovers, companions and mates. So the question is never asked whether, as adults, they could fall in love with a member of their own sex, and the question of bisexuality in sexual choice is ignored.

But now the Gay Liberation Movement, by its protests and demands, has brought into full light of day the problems of men and women who, following deep personal preference, do choose members of their own sex as lovers and living companions. This, I think, should open our minds to a clearer understanding not only of homosexuality but also of our human capacity to love members of both sexes.

All the liberation movements of the last decade have given voice to groups in our society--Blacks, ethnics, young people, women--who have banded together to protest against gross discrimination and to demand equal access to good jobs and fair pay, equal housing and rights within the community and, above all, dignity as individuals. Members of the Gay Movement have fitted into this wider category of protest as men and women who have been discriminated against--even violently rejected--because their sexual behavior differs from all that their relatives, their neighbors and friends and the public in general were brought up to believe is normal. What the men and women in the Gay Movement are now demanding is that we break through our prejudices and recognize their adult right to their own chosen social identity.

But there is not, and it seems unlikely that there will be, a bisexual liberation movement. For the truth is, bisexual men and women do not form a distinct group, since in fact we do not really recognize bisexuality as a form of behavior, normal or abnormal, in our society.

Instead we tend to divide people into two groups, each the mirror image of the other. By far the larger group includes all heterosexually oriented men and women, most of whom cannot even imagine falling in love with a member of their own sex. A very small group (though we do not know, as yet, how large it may be), simply reversing what we regard as normal, confine themselves to members of their own sex in their choice of lovers and companions.

Vaguely, however, we do recognize the existence of men and women who unfortunately, as we see it, fall in love with a homosexual of the opposite sex. It is by putting the devoted companions of many homosexuals into this indistinct third category that we explain to ourselves that homosexuals often are married and the father--or mothers--of children. These we tend to believe are not "real" homosexuals. This is a belief that follows along naturally enough from our cultural belief that homosexuals are heterosexuals in reverse--people who, like ourselves, are committed to loving members of only one sex but differing from the majority in the fact that their commitment is to members of their own sex.

Changing traditional attitudes toward homosexuality is in itself a mind-expanding experience for most people. But we shall not really succeed in discarding the strait jacket of our cultural beliefs about sexual choice if we fail to come to terms with the well-documented, normal capacity to love members of both sexes.

Even a superficial look at other societies and some groups in our own society should be enough to convince us that a very large number of human beings--probably a majority--are bisexual in their potential capacity for love. Whether they will become exclusively heterosexual or exclusively homosexual for all their lives and in all circumstances or whether they will be able to enter into sexual and love relationships with members of both sexes is, in fact, a consequence of the way they have been brought up, of the particular beliefs and prejudices of the society they live in and, to some extent, of their own life history.

Only when the whole subject of sexual selection has been far removed in time or space has it been possible, until recently, to think and talk candidly about homosexuality. But even then we usually have not put all the facts together realistically.

What is new is not bisexuality, but rather the widening of our awareness and acceptance of human capacities for sexual love.

Today the recognition of bisexuality, in oneself and in others, is part of the whole mid-20th-century movement to accord to each individual, regardless of race, class, nationality, age or sex, the right to be a person who is unique and who has a social identity that is worthy of dignity and respect.

At this time in the history of our earth there is no social need to press any individual into parenthood. We can free men and women alike to live as persons--to elect single blessedness, to choose companionship with a member of their own or the opposite sex, to decide to live a fully communal life, to bring up children of their own or to be actively solicitous of other people's children and the children of the future. In the process, those who elect marriage and parenthood as their own fullest expression of love and concern for human life also will be freed. For they will know that they have been free to choose, and have chosen each other and a way of life together.

Excerpted from Redbook Magazine, January 1975. Copyright © 1974 by the Redbook Publishing Company.

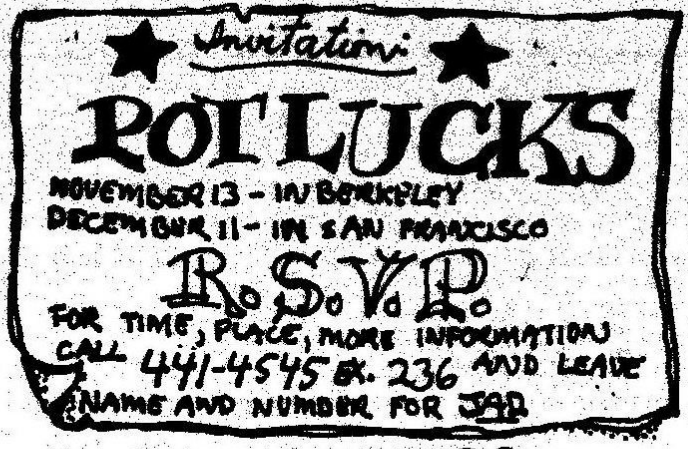
FIRST GENERAL MEETING

There will be a general meeting open to all people interested in the activities of the Bisexual Center on Sunday evening, November 7, 1976, from 7 - 9 p.m. at The National Sex Forum, 1523 Franklin (at Bush), San Francisco, California.

The co-directors and steering committee of the Center will be present. We especially want to hear your suggestions for programs and activities and look forward to meeting you.

WORTH MENTIONING

Musician Elton John recently revealed in an interview in Rolling Stone Magazine (October, 1976, p. 11) that his sexual relationships include both men and women. He stated "There's nothing wrong with going to bed with somebody of your own sex. I think everybody's bisexual to a certain degree. I don't think it's just me. It's not a bad thing to be."



VOLUNTEERS?

The Bisexual Center needs volunteers. Our immediate need is for help in writing and typing our newsletter and answering the mail we receive.

We also have a capable and experienced consultant who is helping us write proposals for grant money. In exchange for his skills, he is willing to barter with us and needs his apartment painted and his furniture refinished. Would you be willing to help?

Please write to us at: The Bisexual Center, 1209 Sutter St., #1643, San Francisco, CA 94109.

We are offering membership in the Bisexual Center to raise funds for the Center's activities and programs. With your membership will come our newsletter, The BiMonthly, and a reduction in fees for various programs.

membership

name: _____

address: _____

_____

home phone: _____

business phone: _____

occupation: _____

skills: _____

_____

$5 --- Student, Retired, Unemployed

$10 --- Regular

$11 - 100 --- Contributing

$101 - 1000 --- Founding

Make check payable to The Bisexual Center and mail to: 1209 Sutter St., #1643, San Francisco CA 94109

GROUPS & WORKSHOPS

The Bisexual Center is a referral service for a variety of counseling and workshop activities. Counselors are qualified and experienced. Available services will be listed in the Bi•Monthly and we will respond to letters and phone calls. You can contact us at: The Bisexual Center, 1209 Sutter St., #1643, San Francisco, CA 94109, and/or (415) 441-4545, Ext. 236. We would prefer a request by mail.

September

24---Friday (started) 8-10 pm ONGOING BI RAP GROUP. For women and men, 8-10 people. To support coming to terms with same and other sex feelings as valid, and finding ways to deal with others' attitudes. $5/group (some scholarships). San Francisco.

Maggi Rubenstein, counselor and educator, works with individuals, couples, women's and both sex groups. Affiliated with the National Sex Forum, U.C. Medical Center, and San Francisco Sex Information, she has been speaking about bisexual concerns for many years. Other groups to follow. Call 441-4545, Ext. 206.

November

1---Monday; 7:30-9:30 pm WOMEN'S ON-GOING SUPPORT GROUP. We will explore feelings about men and women; how to actualize feelings; issues of sexuality and relationships. $5/session (some scholarships available). San Francisco

Margo Rila has been involved in group work and sex education for several years and is the coordinator of San Francisco Sex Information. Call her at 661-6165.

2---Tuesday; 7:30-9:30 pm MEN'S WEEKLY RAP GROUP. An open group focusing on how men experience and resolve the many highs as well as the frustrations surrounding same- and other-sex relationships. A safe, supportive atmosphere to explore issues of bi-relating. $5/session (some scholarships available). Berkeley

Art Lehman, M.A. Psychology, has been leading men's and mixed groups for the past several years. Call him at 525-0407.

4---Thursday; 7:30-9:30 pm BI RAP GROUP. For men and women. We will meet for 3 months to explore bi lifestyles and relationships, and personal identity. Limited to 10 people. $20/mo; $60 for 12 sessions (scholarships available). San Francisco

Joan Israel, M.S.W., is currently facilitating an open bi rap group. Call her at 282-1638 and leave a message.

13---Saturday; 10 am - 6 pm LOVING BOTH a workshop for women & men - exploring, integrating, affirming and expanding sexual and/or emotional relationships with Self, Same & Other sex people. Beyond sexist roles, verbal and non-verbal communication exercises in same sex and integrated groups including the Direct Love Transperience meditation. $20 (scholarships available). San Francisco.

Alan Rockway, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, is widely known for growth workshops and is co-developer of Direct Love Transperience Center in Miami, Florida. Call 525-0407 and leave a message.

Jeanne Paslé-Green, formerly with the Community Sex Information and Education Service, NYC; the National Sex Forum, SF; The Resource Center for Human Relations, Oakland; and The Pacific Center, Berkeley. Co-author of Hello, I Love You, published by Almonde, 2, impasse Lebouis, 75014 Paris, France, available in English, French and Italian. Call her at 534-3878.

20---Saturday; 10 am - 6 pm EXPERIENCING HER; EXPERIENCING SELF. Flowing to the perfect point of communication in our male-male relationships. Intimate sharing without being attached to sexuality. Opening to love-relating without blocking our love and sex with women. Techniques for balancing sensual energy. $20 (limited number of scholarships available). Berkeley

Art Lehman and Alan Rockway will facilitate this workshop (see Nov. 2nd & Nov. 11th). Call 525-0407.

21---Sunday; 10 am - 5 pm INTENSIVE ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING. A workshop for bisexual women and men who want to become more assertive. What is assertiveness? It's an open, honest way of relating that allows you to get in touch with and stand up for your own rights, beliefs and feelings while being sensitive to where other people are coming from. Through extensive role-playing, we'll learn the difference between aggressive, passive, and assertive behavior; deal with criticism; express anger more constructively; put out negative and positive feelings more comfortably--including issues related to bisexuality. $15. Berkeley

Evelyn Hoch, M.S.W., has been leading assertiveness training and sexuality workshops in the Bay Area for several years, and also does individual counseling. Call her at 525-0407 or at 548-7805 and leave your name and phone number.

December

5---Sunday; 10 am - 6 pm GESTALT BISEXUAL WORKSHOP. Using Gestalt and other awareness processes, we will explore our relationships with the same and the opposite sex--what we want from our relationships and how to go about getting it. This is very nourishing experiential work. We'll focus on values, goals and any unfinished business so that we can be more available for the joy of being with others. $15. San Francisco.

Vince Morgante has been enjoying bisexual relationships for 10 years and has been leading groups for 6, including a residential training program at Esalen Institute in Big Sur. Call him at 849-2489.

18---Saturday; 10 am - 5 pm INTENSIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING. A problem-solving workshop for bisexual women in which we will use radical therapy principles to work on problems or questions on bisexuality. Bring specific questions and problems that you want to work on with the group. Limited to 7 women. Bring a sack lunch. $15. Berkeley

Hogie Wyckoff has been doing, teaching and writing about radical psychiatry for 6 years. She is a member of the collective that puts out the quarterly journal, Issues in Radical Therapy. She has written numerous articles on her work and is co-author of Scripts People Live, Readings in Radical Psychiatry, and editor of Love, Therapy and Politics. Call her at 549-1811 or write to her at 2910 Hillegass, Berkeley, Ca. 94705.

In the future...

We recognize that many people not yet involved with the Bi Center have the skills and experience to facilitate groups and workshops. If you are one of those people, we invite you to submit to our screening committee ideas for such processes. Please include a resume, a brief statement on your own personal philosophy on bisexuality, and a description of proposed services, possible fee, etc., to Maggi Rubenstein, The Bisexual Center, 1209 Sutter St., #1643, San Francisco, CA. 94109.

BI•MONTHLY CALENDAR

1976

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS, REFER TO PRECEDING ARTICLE.

NOVEMBER

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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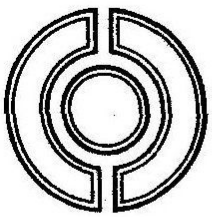

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TO:

David Lourea
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San Francisco, CA 94117

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